

CIRCUMSTANTIAL EVIDENCE.

The murder of old Mr. Weathercroft created the usual nine days' sensation, which died away temporarily at least on the commitment of James Thompson, the deceased's butler, to his trial for the crime. The case could not come on in the ordinary course of events for four or five months, so the public having taken the learned opinion of the prosecution, entered a unanimous verdict of guilty against the accused and turned its attention to other matters. The law officers were to be trusted to do their duty as the appointed time, and the papers would, of course, make things as amus- ing as possible when in time came, James Thompson, in his cell, forgotten by those officially interested in introducing the awful gravity of the law.

Vox populi, vox Dei! Let us follow the example of the severest people and leave old James in his solitary cell while we give a short account of Mr. Weathercroft and his melancholy end.

He was a man of sixty or thereabouts, a retired stockbroker, rich, and of good standing in the community, living in a well-appointed house with a large staff of servants; much given to quiet豪華, and since his retirement paying more attention to his kitchen and wine cellar than the fluctuations of the market and the gambling (save the mark of bulls and bears). An old man was proved over his establishment, and next to it, in his study, a double-barrelled shotgun, almost an old bird in age, and of service, when we have just left waiting trial for the murder of his master.

It would have been difficult to point out any particularity about Mr. Weathercroft, anything to distinguish him from other, more general old butlers of the same class. He was completely supposed to have no eccentricities, hobbies, and a few strong opinions; in fact, those who knew him said he was only a drunk on one subject.

To be called a drunk is the penalty nowadays for holding and airing an opinion. In which at least nine-tenths of the community do not concern.

He had indirect evidence in the deepest distrust, and though as firm a believer in hanging for murder as any ordinary lawyer on or off the bench yet held that no evidence save that of reliable eye-witnesses should send a man to the gallows.

On this obscure topic he was much given to after-dinner discussions, one was his retelling style unknown to the correspondents' columns of the daily papers. He was known to have written a magazine article on the subject, which, however, never saw the light, though it spent a whole year making the rounds of the magazine offices. Such is the editorial mind. His letters to the editor, however, interviewed once or twice when a newspaper was sent up for copy, he enjoyed the process muchly, and always asked the reporter to "call again."

When the old man was dead, and his butler arrested, people said it was a clear case of Nemesis that the evidence against his slayer should be so conclusive and at the same time so public and circumstantial, and some wag of a reporter was heard to say, "At last, old Thompson's trial, conviction, and execution, old Weathercroft's ghost would address gravity denunciation to giddy newspapers from mere forces of habit, or would sit in a corner of ghostland and refuse to be interviewed. The case, indeed, seemed clear enough. Weathercroft had been found dead on the 29th of November, and in great state, the following morning he was found dead, still breathing. The weapon which was found buried in the old man's heart was an old-fashioned silver skewer, part of the family plate, and had clearly been sharpened for its deadly purpose. The sharpener must have been done with a file or some other rude instrument. There was very little external hemorrhage, only a few drops of blood being visible.

The last person who saw the master alive was the accused himself. According to his story he had gone up to Mr. Weathercroft's room with the plate chest, it being the old man's habit to keep the silver in his own room at night, though the butler was always left with the housekeeper after the old man had looked up. This had been the custom in the house for many years. His master was in bed, reading a novel, and said "good night" in his usual way. Mr. Thompson's craft never looked his door at night, as the footman was expected to come in at eight o'clock in the morning, fill the bath, and light the fire.

The butler, all the accused could or would say, had done his best to know of how his master had come to his death.

The footman, on being examined, testified to having found the body. He had entered as usual at eight o'clock scarcely waiting to knock, and had made arrangements for his master's burial, thinking him asleep. Mr. Weathercroft was a hard drinker, but usually awoke when the bath was taken, and his master did not move the witness went to the bed, and, as the butler was the fellow's own expression, "As I hope for my soul, the face was the face of a dead corpse." This witness further added that the bed was but little disordered, the lamp was out, and the novel lay open on its face on the floor. He did not remove the skewer or attempt to do so, and, as he told the housekeeper, who sent him for the police, he had no time to do so. The butler, however, having previously arranged that everything should point clearly to the guilt of James, my butler, he took the skewer, part of the silver committed to his charge, and, finally, on the night of November 19, he sacrificed himself by stabbing himself to the heart.

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[Now First Published.]

R E D D I A M O N D S
BY JUSTIN McCARTHY
AUTHOR OF "THE LADY DIECAST," "DONNA
QUADRATO," "THE COMET OF A
SEASIDE," "THE COMET OF A
SHAMON," "MY ENEMY'S
DAUGHTER," &c.

CHAPTER XXII.

A MAN FROM THE SEA.

The day went on and heralded Gerald's return and public interest in the event. On the other side, Mr. Bostock, passing along the Queen's Road, made for the porticoed hostelry at Mr. Borringer's shop. Then he opened the door and went in.

Inside the shop he stood and looked curiously about him. His interested black eyes ranged rapidly over the long rows of shelves laden with books, paper packages, overalls, and various little domestic articles, strings, seeds and whatnots, kept hidden.

"Good day, Mrs. Borringer," he said. "I have come over especially to see you, so I hope you will let me speak."

"Delighted, Captain," said Mrs. Borringer.

"Will you go upstairs? I shall be with you in a few minutes."

Captain Raven nodded. Bostock watched him with something like interest in his eyes. Every one who knew anything of Captain Raven, who was the little circle of Uncle, which was east of the Ontario College, knew that Captain Raven had a very great admiration for Mrs. Lydia Borringer.

People who did not know Captain Borringer, who did not know Mrs. Borringer, wondered at the jealousy between Lord Wallington's son and the heretical daughter of Captain Raven. It was anything but a secret that Mrs. Borringer's son had been friends for generations with the house of Raven. The farmers of Gambley and the lords of Wallington had been friends for generations. Lord Wallington, the Captain's father, as we have seen, gave away Susan Gamaliel upon the occasion of his marriage with Andrew Borringer, his long-time and then himself but now married for the second time.

In their boyhood the young Raven was always in and out of the garth, and John Haven, who did not know Captain Borringer, was always very fond of Lydia. Lydia, however, had always been very fond of Captain Raven, and moved to the back of the shop, where the door was which led to the dwelling part of the house. She pushed it open just enough to make room for her, and passed through it behind her. Bostock was left alone.

As soon as the door closed behind Lisbeth, Bostock began to move cautiously about the little shop, looking here and there and drawing and passing unnoticed into the shop. He was now ready for package and ready for the names for them, too, were neatly labelled. As he read, it did not seem from the expression of his face as if the reading afforded him any special degree of information.

There was a book on the counter also—a thick, antique volume, a curious old herbal of the seven-teenth century, decorated with a number of quaint plates of plants, mostly described in Latin, which had been bound in the leaves of Lydia, on the back of which was the name of Captain Raven.

Bostock knew that Lord Wallington would hardly be likely to approve of the match, Lord Wallington's approval or disapproval was a master of the most serious indifference to Captain Jacks.

The Wallingtons had never loved each other much, and the fact that Lord Wallington disapproved any particular course of action was generally sufficient reason for John Raven to take just such a course.

Bostock knew, too, through the papers, that the position of Captain Raven had greatly altered. He had been but a penniless younger son, living as best he could by his wits, glad enough to be the secretary of the Voyagers' Club. Now, though the news made public by the master of Seth Chickering, his position was probably altered. By beginning his reading, he had been but a rich and exceedingly rich man.

The death of his father was the desirable match of to-morrow. Bostock

had known that pressure would be brought to bear upon Captain Raven; perhaps it was a work of his own wealth, which made Bostock eye him with such suspicion.

But Bostock did not notice that Bostock was watching him; had no idea of any thoughts that might be passing through Bostock's mind. It would not have occurred to Raven that any thoughts of Bostock could possibly affect him in any way.

"All right," said Raven. "I'll go up. Shall you be coming presently?"

"Certainly, said Mrs. Borringer. "I shall be coming up directly."

"I have been having one of those headaches again," he said, with a laugh that was partly apologetic.

Mrs. Borringer looked disapproval and spoke it.

"You young man," she said, "you young men, you are all alike."

"Indeed," Raven pouted eagerly, and glanced civily at Bostock, as if willing to include him in the conversation as he was present, "we are all alike."

"I really don't think," Bostock answered gravely, "I know so little of young men about town."

"No, really, Mrs. Borringer," Raven went on, "but I was a bit late the other night. A sort of supper I had to give those who heard the news—about the young man, I think they said it was Susan Gamaliel, who had never been to any of my parties before, and I was a bit late the other night."

Mrs. Borringer's stern expression relaxed, as it always did after John Raven had talked.

"Very well," she said, "I'll see what can be done."

Raven waited, and I'll find something for you."

"Well," said Mrs. Borringer, "what do you want to do?"

Raven laughed. "You know, can't you fix up a party for me?" he said, half seriously, but I don't believe, not a cent; but you know all about these sorts of things, and might give me a powder or a draught or something that would fit me up right."

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Bostock shook his head. "No, indeed, that is not at all my line. What would you say if I said I was a bit late the other night?"

"By the way, Mr. Bostock," she said, "you have yet told me what you want of me?"

"I beg your pardon," Bostock replied. "I am interested in your conversation that I lost my party slip at the moment. Well, I came to you for help, and I'll find something for you."

Raven laughed again, nodded good-humoredly to Bostock, and passed out of the shop into the "family passage," as he called the rest of the building. When the door closed upon him, Mrs. Borringer again turned to Bostock.

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"I beg your pardon," Bostock replied. "I am interested in your conversation that I lost my party slip at the moment. Well, I came to you for help, and I'll find something for you."

Raven waited, and I'll find something for you."

"Well, the fact is," said Bostock, "that I have been having a great deal from the Continent, and I don't know what to do with it."

"I am sorry, of course, that Lady Scarsdale thinks a lot of it, and it may be a fine exercise, I dare say, but it is no finer exercise than making hay which I did when I was a girl and a stronger woman now than you are, and I'll find something for you."

"And very well she fancies, too; very well indeed," Bostock interpolated.

"That's neither here nor there," said Mrs. Borringer. "What I want to know is what the good of teaching a party of girls, or a parcel of men, either to the world, how to handle a bit of a party, and the like?"

"Oh, the Continent, my dear Mrs. Borringer," Bostock interjected.

"Oh, on the Continent," answered Mrs. Borringer, with deep disdain; "on the Continent man may make monkeys of themselves with slaves if they like, but here, in England, we don't hold with such notions, and if we do, it will not be with a girl and a stronger woman now than you are, and I'll find something for you."

"And Mrs. Borringer glared at Mr. Bostock with an air of good-humoured defiance, as if she had convinced that she had completely annihilated him.

Bostock smiled a deprecatory smile and waved his hand again as if he were physically purring Mrs. Borringer's attitude.

"Well, I'll say," said "I frankly admit that you are of more use to the world than I am. Here you sit surrounded by herbs that are only herbs and healing—"

Mrs. Borringer interrupted him.

"That depends, Mr. Bostock—that depends. Some of these herbs of mine are the deadliest things under Heaven, if they be really or wrongfully."

"Is that so?" Mr. Bostock said with much surprise. "How very curious; how very interesting. Surely there is nothing in all this array of innocent packages which could possibly do any harm to anything!"

Mrs. Borringer sat sternly at the fender.

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It is done, now every time a telepathic communication is made, the world hopes that I can bring the deaf and dumb to hear, and the blind to see by the same brain-tickling capacity of this universal agent.

MIND'S MEASUREMENTS.

There is an article in the "Philosophical Review" for May on "Mental Measurements" by Professor Cattell. There are many good points in the paper that are interesting, especially those in which he deals with the measurement of the time required for perception, movement, and thought. Colour is not measured at less than one-hundredth of a second on the retina, and the eye gives the maximum impression with which the intensity declines; it takes about one-tenth of a second for the pain of burning to be communicated from the indolent brain, and for the hand to be withdrawn; it takes about a quarter of a second to translate words in a foreign language; but it is difficult to multiply the number of the philosophical table; the quarter of a second is the interval of time which can be most accurately measured.

POLITICIANS AND THEIR CARICATUREISTS.

In the Strand there is an illustrated interview with Mr. Furniss, in which the famous caricaturist goes so easily to his experiences. He says Mr. Morley is the most difficult of all statesmen to caricature; he will be a boy, a young man, and an old man, all in the same caricature. Arthur Balfour is difficult, and Sir Richard Temple, the easiest. Mr. Gladstone, however, is the most wonderful man for the caricaturist, and one of the first.

"I have sat and watched the rose in his mouth open and close, his hair becoming dishevelled with excitement, and his tie get round to the back of his neck."

The interview at this point asked Mr. Furniss what the views of his subjects thought of him. He replied:

"I get most abusive letters from both sides. Wives of members write and say not to caricature their husbands. One lady wrote to me the other day, and said if I would persist in caricaturing her husband, I would put him in a fashionable coat. Now, this is particularly mean, and I have the old-fashioned notion of the coat-to-means. An other asked me to make the sharer of her joys and sorrows better looking; whilst only last week a lady—the wife of a particularly well-known M.P.—addressed me a most plaintive letter to me, saying that since some of the younger members of the house had confided to see my pictures, the house became quite afraid to wear them."

"Why, members often come to me to caricature them. One member was very kindly disposed to me, and suggested that I should keep my eye on him. I did. Yet he did me dear when he saw his picture! It's so discouraging, don't you know, when you are so anxious to oblige."

I asked Mr. Furniss if he thought there was any real animosity in caricature.

"Not at all," he replied; "in Spain, Italy, and France, our caricaturists there score off their cruelty."

OLLA PODRIDA.

In the 27th during which Dr. Barnardo has been engaged in his human labours 22,000 wiffs and strays have been rescued. Of these nearly 6,000 have been sent to the colonies.

The following remarkable entry appears in the parish register of Mitcham, Surrey:—Anne, the daughter of George Washford, who had 24 fingers and toes, baptised October 19, 1690.

Request: "The examination seems to have delighted you, doctor. I judge from your happy countenance that you can save my life." Dr. Sawbones: "I cannot promise you that; but we must perform a number of most interesting operations on you."

At a dinner party Erskine was seated near Miss Hartmann, commonly called Miss Hinckie, who had been celebrated for her beauty, but was then somewhat past the meridian of life. "The say that she is a great man for making girls fat," said a friend, "but I think she would make a pun on me." "At Hinckie," was the quip, "you are no chicken."

A singular and very singular incident in the Duke of Edinburgh's Tour. It is to the effect that at the time of their marriage they made a mutual agreement not to talk to each other in public during their courtship days. This singular vow of silence was to prevent them making public exhibition of their tenderness towards each other. The Duke and the Princess have no doubt observed the girls many engaged young couples make of themselves carrying on their courtship in public.

Professor George Moore, an American inventor, has devised a mechanical man seated by steam, which is described and illustrated in an American book just published. The man is six feet high, made of steel in blocks of iron, and has the head and shoulders of a medieval knight in armor, with the top of the head concealed by the plumes of his helmet, and an escape pipe from his visor enabling a cigar. The trunk of the body contains the furnace, boiler, and engine, the limbs the mechanism for walking. The figure is intended to pull a coat, and walks briskly at a pace of five miles an hour.

"Soot of Hoxton" is a name that it probably familiar to you. He was one of the earliest clergymen journalists. The editor of the "Christian Remembrancer" in the first days of the "Morning Chronicle" when it was Paul's newspaper. One of the brilliant writers of the "Saturday Evening" in its famous days. "Soot of Hoxton" was once a power in the literary and journalistic world. His widow died recently and was buried in Highgate Cemetery by the side of her husband. "Soot of Hoxton" was Mr. Clement Scott's father.

According to the latest published statistical returns the submarine telegraph system comprises 1,163 lines extending over 140,000 nautical miles. Of the total the various governmental administrations hold 1,000 miles, the Post Office 14,400 miles of cable and 2,100 miles of wire. The remaining 340 miles are distributed between 64 lines, while Norway owns 255 lines, and Great Britain 115 cables and 1,528 miles. As regards the companies enumerated in the returns, they have between them 288 cables, extending over 13,364 miles, and containing 12,632 miles of wire.

Mr. Clarence King, the well-known American geologist and explorer, has advanced Lord Kelvin's method of determining the age of the earth by considering the effect of heat and pressure on certain rocks (especially diabase) whose specific gravity is approximately equal to that of the earth's crust. His conclusion is that the earth's age is 24 million years. This agrees with the general conclusions of Lord Kelvin, who only gave upper and lower limits; and it is quite discordant with the demands of geologists, which may best be described as "vaguely vast".

When the Archduke Ferdinand started for his voyage round the world in December last, one of his cousins, the Archduke Leopold Salvator, eldest son of the Grand Duke of Tuscany, was appointed first lieutenant on board the iron cruiser "Empress Elizabeth". The Archduke, who had made a voyage round the world in the "Empress", did not like the idea of not agreeing with him, that his nerves are irritated, and he returned home from Australia on board an English steamer; but there is an impression that the two Archdukes did not quite agree, and that for this reason the younger was recalled home.

The marriage of the Anarchist Briouc has just taken place in Paris, under singular circumstances. Briouc had a hand in the blowing up of the Café Véry, though he was not one of the principals, and he was sentenced to 20 years' hard labour. The other day he expressed a wish to marry his mistress, Mme. Delange, and left his prison cell to do so. He is 45 years old.

The ceremony accidentally took place in prison, and at (as coincident) Briouc was addressed by an official who told him that he behaved himself in New Caledonia his wife would be sent out to join him in three years at the expense of the Government. Then, said the official, will come the lawyers, and then they will be arrested.

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In the opinion of Mr. A. C. M'Hughes, of the Church of England Grammar School, North Shore, New Zealand, the world is bound to have the blind to see by the same brain-tickling capacity of this universal agent.

On the author of an extraordinary series of burglaries at Vienna, a clerk was found a note-book (each page of which he kept a date) recording the date of each robbery, and even how often he returned to the house, upon which he was engaged to carry away his booty. The diary gives a complete clue to his character, for it contains his views upon all that had happened during the last five years, and the details of about twenty love-affairs he carried on. He never in all his burglar's career trusted other men or women with his secret.

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